

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to coerce their stations to air an anti-Kerry "documentary" days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation and demonstrates the corporation's interest in directly desiring to influence the election without the corrective of alternative viewpoints.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies like Sinclair control the airwaves, the needs of our democracy are not served. Instead of something "canned programming" produced at a central point far away, it's more important that to see and hear real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. The opinions of corporate leadership are those toward which programming is slanted to the detriment of the public interest. A variety of viewpoints are not presented so that viewers have the option to hear all sides of an issue and come to an informed conclusion based on facts.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. I feel very strongly that the proper functioning of our democracy is at stake in this matter. Too much control is vested in the hands of too few when it comes to media ownership and all of us suffer.